



Alexandria Police Department



Directive 3.7

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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3.7.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

It is the Department's policy to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism in handling official correspondence and documents received by, or created within the department.

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for all employees to follow while forwarding and/or preparing official correspondence; and provide commanders with a central reference source when questions related to official correspondence arise.

3.7.02 DEFINITION

Official Correspondence:

- A. Any written communication relating to official business received by the department, addressed to any employee of this agency, is official correspondence.
- B. Any document or report prepared by a department employee for official purposes and use within the department or dissemination outside the department.

3.7.03 PROCEDURES

A. Forwarding Communications to Higher Commands: Any employee receiving a written communication addressed to a higher level of command will forward such communication without delay. An employee receiving a communication from a subordinate directed to a higher level of command will endorse it, indicate their approval or disapproval, include any pertinent comments, and forward it to the next level of command.

B. Proper Forwarding of Correspondence Addressed to Chief of Police: Although it remains the policy of the department to make every attempt to resolve issues at the lowest possible level, supervisors and commanders are reminded that all memoranda and letters addressed to the Chief of Police - whether approved or disapproved at some level within the chain of command - are to be forwarded to the Chief without delay. Letters and memoranda addressed and forwarded to the Chief of Police shall contain endorsements from officials who reviewed and/or acted on a particular request. Members of the department who prepare and submit letters or memoranda through the chain of command to the Chief of Police may, at their discretion, also forward a courtesy copy of their correspondence to the Office of the Chief. In all cases, personnel submitting letters or memoranda to the Chief of Police shall be notified of final action taken by either the Office of the Chief or an appropriate official within the submitting member's chain of command.

C. Preparing official correspondence:

Employees preparing documents, reports, or any other written matter that are expected to leave the department, or which will form the basis of a permanent record, are expected to ensure the following:

1. Information contained in the correspondence is accurate, complete and reflects the latest information.
2. Correspondence is free from spelling, punctuation, grammatical errors and inappropriate gender-specific language.
3. If other persons or activities in the department or within city government are mentioned in the correspondence, those persons have been contacted or consulted about the final content of the correspondence, and their input is accurately conveyed.
4. Proper routing procedures are followed to ensure accurate tracking of correspondence assignments.
5. Assignments are submitted in accordance with any due dates established, keeping in mind the need for the final reviewer to review the document, make necessary changes, return it to the originator for correction, and have it submitted through channels for signature.

6. Employees will not use department letterhead for private correspondence or send correspondence out of the department over their signatures without the permission of the police chief.
7. The police chief may authorize others to sign certain documents on his or her behalf. Whenever such persons sign the police chief's name they will affix their initials immediately below the signature.

3.7.04**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The City Council Liaison** will maintain a correspondence tracking system for most correspondence assignments that originated outside the department, ensuring that all personnel within the organization are aware of the importance of adhering to established due dates, and that each assignment remains on schedule to meet the due dates. Upon being made aware of the possibility that a due date will be missed, he or she will take the necessary action to arrange an extension. Only in unusual cases will a second extension be granted, and it then becomes critical for all personnel to cooperate to meet that due date.
- B. Commanders** who receive correspondence directly from the public will give it such attention as may be immediately required when the matter comes within the purview of their duties. Employees of the department below the level of commander who receive correspondence directly from the public will submit it to their commander or supervisor.

Commanders will ensure that any assigned correspondence is completed by the due date. If this is not possible, the commander will contact the appropriate staff person to arrange for an extension. Any correspondence needing correction will be returned.

BY AUTHORITY OF:

David P. Baker
Chief of Police